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Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 06753 212042Z
ACTION OES-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP, BL
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL PROBLEMS -- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE GOOD PRODUCTION

REF: (A) STATE 107370, (B) STATE 200404

1. I HAVE, IN THE COURSE OF COURTESY VISITS ON NEW GOB OFFICIALS, OPENED A DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT PEREDA ANDOTHER HIGH LEVEL GOB OFFICIALS ON GOB MEASURES AND JOINT USG-GOB EFFORTS TO MEET THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE POOR THROUGH SELF-HLP MEASURES AND TO ADVANCE THEIR OWN PLANS AND ASPIRATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION. THESE GOB OFFICIALS WERE EXTREMELY RECEPTIVE AND SENSITIVE TO THESE PROBLEMS AND HAVE ALREADY TAKEN MEASURES TO ACCELERATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF JOINT GOB/USG EFFORTS TO ASSIST IN IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF THE RURALL POOR AND INCREASE FOOD AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

2. THERE EXISTS IN THE GOB A SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONSTRAINTS ON INCREASED AGRICULTURAL/FOOD PRODUCTION IN BOLIVIA. EVEN THOUGH BOLIVIA IMPORTS WHEAT, LARD, AND DAIRY PRODUCTS, IT HAS IN RECENT YEARS BEEN A NET EXPORTER OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (PRINCIPALLY SUGAR, COTTON, COFFEE, RICE AND BRAZIL NUTS). EXPANSIONN OF BOLIVIA'S AGRICULTURAL
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EXPORTS AND INCREASED PRODUCTION FOR INTERNAL CONSUMPTION IS CONSTRAINED BY EFFECTIVE DEMAND. BOLIVIA IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE INCREASED PRODUCTION OF DAIRY PRODUCTS AND OILS AND IS ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE ITS INTERNAL WHEAT MARKETING STRUCTURES TO IMPROVE INCENTIVES FOR INCREASING DOMESTIC WHEAT PRODUCTION. GOB OFFICIALS ARE AWARE THAT INCREASING DOMESTIC FOOD PRODUCTION OF PRODUCTS

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FOR WHICH EFFECTIVE DEMAND IS CURRENTLY BEING SATISFIED OR
EXCEEDED IS A COMPLEX PROBLEM WHICH REQUIRES RAISING THE
INCOMES OF POORER SEGMENTS IN BOLIVIA'S POPULATION (PRINCI-
PALLY PEASANTS) AND THAT BECAUSE OF POOR WORLD MARKET
CONDITIONS IN ITS PRINCIPAL EXPORT CROPS AND THE HIGH
TRANSPORT COSTS WHICH INHIBIT THE EXPANSION OF POTENTIAL
EXPORT CROPS SUCH INCREASES IN PEASANT INCOMES CAN ONLY
BE ATTAINED GRADUALLY AS THE GROWTH OF DEMAND IN DOMESTIC
AGRICULTURAL MARKETS PERMITS.

3. WITH REGARD TO CONTROL OF POPULATION GROWTH: I HAVE
NOT DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE WITH GOB OFFICIALS BECAUSE OF ITS
SENSITIVITY AND BECAUSE THE AID DIRECTOR AND ACTING DEPUTY
DIRECTOR HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH PRESIDENT PEREDA
AND RECEIVED AN EXTREMELY NEGATIVE REACTION FROM HIM. THE
PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE THAT A STRONG CONCENSUS EXISTS AMONG ALMOST
ALL GROUPS WHICH INFLUENCE BOLIVIAN DECION MAKING THAT
BOLIVIA IS UNDER POPULATED RELATIVE TO ITS TERRITORIAL
EXTENSION AND NATURAL RESOURCE BASE. THE COSTS
AND DIFFICULTIRES OF EDUCATION, PROVIDING HEALTH CARE
AND DECENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TOO A RAPIDLY GROWING
POPULATION ARE NOT EQUALLY APPRECIATED. CLOSELY RELATED
TO THE BOLIVIAN PERCEPTION OF UNDER POPULATION ARE GEO-
POLITICAL CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR POPULATION RELATITIVE
TO THAT OF THEIR MORE PUPULOUS NEIGHBORS. BOLIVIAN MILITARY MEN
SEEM TO BE EXPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THIS DIMENSION OF
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PUPULATION GROWTH.

4. IN ORDER TO EXPLORE POSSIBLE WAYS IN WHICH TO OPEN A
CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH GOB OFFICIALS ON THE PUPULATION
QUESTION, I HAVE NAMED A COMMISSION OF AID AND EMBASSY
PERSONNEL WHO ARE STUDYING POSSIBLE OPTIONS.

5. I WILL INFORM THE DEPARTMENT AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME
REGARDING PROGRESS IN THE POPULATION AREA. I WOULD PROPOSE
TO REPORT ON FOOD PRODUCTION ONLY IF THE GOB WERE TO TAKE
BACKWARD STEPS.
BOEKER

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